

I am writing to oppose County Executive Elrich's proposed 10% property tax rate hike. In a time of high inflation, when household expenses are increasing in all aspects of life, it is unconscionable that the Montgomery County government would exacerbate the issue by imposing a 10% property tax rate hike. Many councilmembers ran on making housing more affordable. How does increasing a component of housing costs achieve that respectable goal? Additionally, this rate increase comes on top of astronomical increases in assessed property values by the Maryland Department of Taxes and Assessment. My own assessment increased by over \$110,000, which would on its own represent an increase in property taxes. To increase the rate on top of that assessment increase is offensive.

Instead of making county residents pay more, the county council should make budgetary choices on what needs funding. Obviously we all want well funded schools, but to make that happen, other parts of Mr. Elrich's proposed budget may need to be reallocated. Not every budget item can be priority #1. Programs introduced during the pandemic based on temporary federal funding should not be made permanent if that funding stream cannot be maintained.

I urge you to reject the proposed property tax rate increase. If you move it ahead, I anticipate many people, myself included, will leave the county for surrounding areas that are less burdensome financially. Remote work means that we do not need the same proximity to Washington, DC, that we did three years ago. Families have greater geographic flexibility, and are not rooted to one area, as they were in the past. You cannot count on people staying in the area as their housing costs increase due to ill-advised government taxes.

Sincerely,
Ian Swank